

Summarize & Synthesize: Retell, Summarize, Compare, Reflect

6 complete activities from Summarize & Synthesize, each with a worked answer.

Read

Read the passage closely.

Find

Underline the words that prove it.

Explain

Tell how the clues fit together.

HOW TO USE

1. Read the situation and the evidence first.
2. Show your thinking in the work boxes, not only an answer.
3. Explain how you know your answer makes sense.
4. Try the new problem at the bottom of the page.

6 activities • 3 answer pages • From the 16-activity collection

10 US Letter pages • Print at 100% / Actual Size

Original Bobotemp educational printable • Fictional names, places and prices

Name _____ Date _____

Sandcastle Sort: Retell or Summary?

LEVEL 1



Read the story paragraph and the four responses. Use all three clues to find the one true summary.

Read the story. On Saturday, Lena entered the town sandcastle contest. She packed two buckets, a shovel, and a blue spray bottle. At the beach, her first tower kept crumbling because the sand was too dry. Lena watched a boy pour water onto his sand before he built. She wet her own sand, and her next tower stood tall. Lena did not win, but she went home proud of what she had learned. A retell lists events in order and keeps small details. A summary is short, names the central idea, and keeps only key events. Which response is the summary?

RESPONSES**Response A**

Lena packed two buckets, a shovel, and a blue spray bottle. Then she went to the beach. Then her tower crumbled. Then she saw a boy use water.

Response C

The blue spray bottle is the best part because it is my favorite color.

Response B

When Lena's dry-sand tower kept falling, she learned from another builder to wet the sand, and she felt proud even without winning.

Response D

First Lena packed, next she went to the beach, then she built, and last she went home happy.

CLUES

Clue 1: The summary leaves out small details like the blue spray bottle.

Clue 2: The summary does not march through events with first, then, or next.

Clue 3: The summary names the problem and how it was solved.

1. Circle the one summary and write the clues it passes.

2. Label A and D as retells and underline one retell signal in each.

3. Explain in one sentence why C is neither a retell nor a summary.

TRY IT • Response E: 'Lena learned that wet sand holds its shape, so her tower stood even though she did not win.' Is E a retell or a summary? Give one reason.

Name _____ Date _____

Story Frame: Find the Turning Point

LEVEL 1



Read the story. Fill in the Somebody-Wanted-But-Then-So frame. Use the clues to choose the turning point.

Read the story. Para. 1: Jonah wanted to play a trumpet solo at the spring concert. Para. 2: At practice, his notes squeaked every time he reached the high part, and he thought about giving the solo to someone else. Para. 3: His music teacher, Ms. Reyes, showed him how to play the hard part slowly, then a little faster each day. Para. 4: On concert night, Jonah played the high notes clearly, and the audience clapped. Complete the story frame: Somebody, Wanted, But, Then, So. Which event belongs in the Then (turning point) box?

EVENTS

Event A

Jonah wants to play a solo.
(Para. 1)

Event B

His high notes squeak.
(Para. 2)

Event C

Ms. Reyes shows him how to
practice slowly, then faster.
(Para. 3)

Event D

The audience claps. (Para.
4)

CLUES

Clue 1: The turning point happens after
the problem appears.

Clue 2: The turning point is not the
ending.

Clue 3: The turning point changes what
the character does.

1. Fill in all five frame boxes in your own words.

2. Circle the event for the Then box and name the clue that rules out Event D.

3. Cross out the frame words and write the frame as one or two smooth sentences.

TRY IT • Omar wanted to grow the tallest sunflower in class. His first seeds were planted in shade and barely grew. His neighbor pointed out the sunny corner by the fence. Omar replanted there, and his sunflower grew taller than the fence. What is the turning point?

Name _____ Date _____

Topic, Detail, or Central Idea? Coats for Every Season

LEVEL 2



Read the passage. Test each answer choice against all three clues. Only the central idea survives every clue.

Which choice is the central idea of 'Coats for Every Season'? A) Snowshoe hares. B) Snowshoe hares have big, furry back feet. C) Many animals have ways to stay safe. D) The snowshoe hare changes its coat color with the seasons, which helps it blend in and hide. Clue 1: The central idea is a full statement, not just a topic. Clue 2: It is about snowshoe hares, not animals in general. Clue 3: It connects to the coat changes in paragraphs 2 and 3 and to hiding in paragraph 4.

COATS FOR EVERY SEASON

- 1 The snowshoe hare lives in northern forests where the seasons change a lot. Its coat changes, too.
- 2 In fall, the hare sheds its brown fur and grows white fur. The white coat blends in with winter snow.
- 3 In spring, the hare sheds again and grows brown fur. Now it blends in with dirt, leaves, and logs.
- 4 Blending in helps the hare hide from hunters such as lynxes and owls. Its big, furry back feet also help it hop across deep snow.

LABEL EACH CHOICE

Choice	Label
A	
B	
C	
D	

1. Label each choice: Topic, Detail, Too Broad, or Central Idea.

2. Write the paragraph numbers that support the central idea.

3. In one sentence, explain why choice B is not the central idea.

TRY IT • Mini passage: (1) Sea otters spend much of their lives floating on their backs. (2) They use rocks to crack open hard shells. (3) They wrap themselves in kelp so they do not drift away while resting. Label each choice as Topic, Detail, or Central Idea: Sea otters / Sea otters use rocks to crack shells / Sea otters have clever habits that help them eat and rest while floating.

Name _____ Date _____

Shrink It in Three Steps: An Island Made by Fire

LEVEL 2



Shrink the passage step by step. Cut minor details and combine ideas so the final summary is 20–30 words. Hyphenated words and contractions count as one word.

Step 1: Write one sentence each for paragraphs 2, 3, and 4. Step 2: Join them into one sentence. Step 3: Trim it into a summary of 20–30 words. Then check this model summary chunk by chunk: [Volcanic islands form when lava erupts from the sea floor,] [cools into rock,] [and piles up in layers over a long time] [until the top rises above the ocean.] How many words does the model have in all, and does it fit the range?

AN ISLAND MADE BY FIRE

1 Some islands are built by volcanoes that begin deep under the ocean.

2 Hot melted rock rises through cracks in the sea floor and erupts as lava. The lava cools in the water and hardens into rock.

3 Eruption after eruption, layers of rock pile up. Over a very long time, the pile grows taller.

4 Finally, the top of the pile rises above the water, and a new island has formed. Later, plants and animals may arrive.

MODEL: 20–30 WORDS?

Chunk	Words
Chunk 1	
Chunk 2	
Chunk 3	
Chunk 4	
Total	

1. Step 1: Write three short sentences, one each for paragraphs 2, 3, and 4.

2. Step 2: Combine them into one sentence. Cross out one minor detail you left out.

3. Step 3: Count the words in each chunk of the model. Write the total and whether it fits 20–30.

TRY IT • A classmate's summary of the same passage has three chunks of 12, 9, and 11 words. Is it inside the 20–30 word range? If not, name one kind of detail to cut.

Name _____ Date _____

Synthesis Starter: Glass on the Go

LEVEL 3



Read both short texts. Test each synthesis statement with three checks: Does it use Text A? Does it use Text B? Is it accurate? Choose the one statement that passes all three.

Text A (informational) explains how glass is recycled. Text B (story) tells how Room 12 ran a jar collection drive. Which statement is the best synthesis?

- A. Recycled glass is crushed into cullet and melted into new bottles.
- B. Room 12 collected clean jars from families in bins.
- C. Recycling plants sort glass by color, so Room 12's separate bins for green and clear jars helped get the jars ready to become new glass.
- D. Room 12 crushed and melted the jars at school to make new bottles.

TEXT A (INFORMATIONAL)

- 1 Used glass is sorted by color, such as clear, green, and brown.
- 2 Sorted glass is crushed into small pieces called cullet.
- 3 Cullet is melted and shaped into new jars and bottles.

TEXT B (STORY)

- 1 Room 12 set out bins where families could drop off clean jars.
- 2 Ama saw green and clear jars mixed together, so the class made one bin for each color.
- 3 A recycling truck picked up the bins on Friday.

THREE CHECKS

	Uses A?	Uses B?	Accurate?
A			
B			
C			
D			

1. Mark each statement: Uses Text A? Uses Text B? Accurate?

2. Circle the best synthesis and cite one paragraph from each text.

3. Write one sentence explaining what is wrong with statement D.

TRY IT • Write a different synthesis statement that uses Text A ¶3 and Text B ¶1.

Name _____ Date _____

Check the Sort: Owls After Dark

LEVEL 3



Read the central idea and the six detail cards. Check a classmate's sort, find the one card in the wrong group, and explain where it belongs.

Central idea: Owls have body features that help them hunt in the dark.

Jordan sorted six cards:

Essential: A, B, C

Supporting: D

Extra: E, F

Essential cards name a main feature that helps owls hunt in the dark. Supporting cards explain how a feature on another card works. Extra cards are true but do not explain hunting in the dark. A correct sort has 2 Essential, 2 Supporting, and 2 Extra cards. Exactly one card is in the wrong group. Find it, move it, and give a one-sentence reason tied to the central idea.

DETAIL CARDS

A: Owls have eyes and ears that help them find prey in low light.

B: Owls fly almost silently, so prey may not hear them coming.

C: In some owls, one ear opening sits higher than the other, which helps them pinpoint sounds.

D: Soft, fringed edges on owl feathers quiet the sound of air rushing past.

E: A group of owls is sometimes called a parliament.

F: Owls appear in many old stories and artworks.

1. Name the card that is in the wrong group.

2. Write the corrected sort for all six cards.

3. Write one sentence explaining why the moved card belongs in its new group.

TRY IT • Place this new card and give a reason: 'Owls cough up pellets of fur and bones after eating.'

1. Sandcastle Sort: Retell or Summary?

LEVEL 1

Response B is the summary. A and D are retells. C is an opinion about a minor detail, so it is neither.

WORKED REASONING • Clue 1: A and C mention the blue spray bottle, so only B and D survive. Clue 2: A repeats 'Then' and D uses first, next, then, so only B and C survive. Clue 3: Only B names the problem (the dry sand kept falling) and the solution (wet the sand). B is the only response that passes all three clues. A retells events in order with small details. D retells in order but never names the problem. C gives an opinion about one small detail and tells nothing about what happened.

WATCH FOR • Students may think any short response is a summary. Response C is short, but it is an opinion about a minor detail with no central idea. Other students may think the longest response is best because it includes more.

TRANSFER • Summary. It is short, uses no sequence words, skips small details, and names the problem-solving lesson and the result.

2. Story Frame: Find the Turning Point

LEVEL 1

Event C is the turning point. Frame: Somebody: Jonah. Wanted: to play a trumpet solo. But: his high notes squeaked. Then: Ms. Reyes showed him to practice slowly, then faster. So: he played clearly at the concert.

WORKED REASONING • The problem appears in Para. 2, so Clue 1 leaves only Events C and D. Event D is the ending, so Clue 2 leaves A, B, and C. Clue 3 asks what changes Jonah's actions: after Ms. Reyes's tip, he practices a new way, so only C passes. C is the only event in all three groups. Smooth summary: Jonah wanted to play a trumpet solo, but his high notes squeaked until Ms. Reyes showed him how to practice slowly, and he played clearly at the concert.

WATCH FOR • Students often put the ending (the audience claps) in the Then box because it is the most exciting moment. The turning point is the event that changes what the character does, and it comes before the resolution.

TRANSFER • The neighbor pointed out the sunny corner by the fence. It comes after the problem, is not the ending, and changes what Omar does (he replants).

6. Topic, Detail, or Central Idea? Coats for Every Season

LEVEL 2

D: The snowshoe hare changes its coat color with the seasons, which helps it blend in and hide. A is the topic, B is a single detail, and C is too broad.

WORKED REASONING • Clue 1 removes A because 'Snowshoe hares' only names the topic. Clue 2 removes C because it is about many animals, which is too broad for this passage. Clue 3 removes B because the big feet are one detail from paragraph 4, not the coat change that paragraphs 2 and 3 explain. Only D survives all three clues. Paragraph 2 (white coat in fall), paragraph 3 (brown coat in spring), and paragraph 4 (blending in to hide) all support D.

WATCH FOR • Students often choose B because it is true and specific. A true detail is not the central idea unless most of the passage explains it. Other students choose C because it sounds important, but a statement that could fit many passages is too broad.

TRANSFER • Topic: Sea otters. Detail: Sea otters use rocks to crack shells. Central idea: Sea otters have clever habits that help them eat and rest while floating. Sentences 1–3 all support the central idea.

7. Shrink It in Three Steps: An Island Made by Fire

LEVEL 2

The model summary has 29 words ($10 + 3 + 9 + 7 = 29$), so it fits the 20–30 word range.

WORKED REASONING • Chunk counts: 'Volcanic islands form when lava erupts from the sea floor' = 10 words; 'cools into rock' = 3; 'and piles up in layers over a long time' = 9; 'until the top rises above the ocean' = 7. Total: $10 + 3 + 9 + 7 = 29$ words, which is inside 20–30. The model keeps the central idea (undersea volcanoes build islands) and the essential steps from paragraphs 2–4. It cuts the minor detail about plants and animals arriving. It also changes wording, such as 'the water' to 'the ocean,' so no five-word string is copied.

WATCH FOR • Some students think a shorter summary is always better and cut essential steps such as the rock piling up. Others keep every detail, including plants and animals arriving, and go over the range. A strong summary cuts minor details but keeps every step needed to explain the central idea.

TRANSFER • $12 + 9 + 11 = 32$ words, so it is 2 words over the range. Cut a minor detail, such as plants and animals arriving, or combine repeated words like 'the rock' and 'the pile.'

11. Synthesis Starter: Glass on the Go

LEVEL 3

C. It is the only statement that uses both texts and stays accurate (Text A ¶1 and Text B ¶12).

WORKED REASONING • Check 1 (uses Text A): A, C, and D mention sorting, crushing, or melting glass. Check 2 (uses Text B): B, C, and D mention Room 12. Check 3 (accurate): D is wrong. Text B never says the class crushed or melted jars, and the truck took the bins away (B ¶13). Only C passes all three checks. C links a fact from Text A ¶1 (glass is sorted by color) with an event from Text B ¶12 (the color bins). Together they make an idea that neither text states alone.

WATCH FOR • Students may pick D because it mentions both texts, without checking whether the combined facts are true. A synthesis must be accurate as well as use two sources.

TRANSFER • Sample: The clean jars that families dropped in Room 12's bins (Text B ¶1) could later be melted and shaped into new jars and bottles (Text A ¶13). Accept any accurate statement that needs both paragraphs.

12. Check the Sort: Owls After Dark

LEVEL 3

Card C is in the wrong group. It belongs in Supporting because it explains how the hearing feature in Card A works.

WORKED REASONING • Jordan has 3 Essential cards and only 1 Supporting card, so one Essential card must move to Supporting. First, the card must come from Jordan's Essential group (A, B, or C). Second, by the definition, a Supporting card explains how a feature on another card works. C explains A's hearing, and D explains B's silent flight. Only C fits both clues. A and B each state a main feature, so they stay Essential. E and F are interesting but say nothing about hunting, so they stay Extra. Correct sort: Essential A, B; Supporting C, D; Extra E, F.

WATCH FOR • Students often label any specific, scientific-sounding detail as Essential. A specific 'how it works' detail usually supports a broader essential point instead of standing alone.

TRANSFER • Extra. It is true and interesting, but it describes what happens after eating, not a feature that helps owls hunt in the dark.